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NUTRITION COMMITTEE NEWS

For exchange of information on nutrition education and school lunch activities.

November-December 1953

WASHINGTON, D. C.

SOME TECHNIQUES FOR PRESENTING NUTRITION INFORMATION

"SELLING" NUTRITION

Many techniques and principles used by salesmen and advertisers to sell their wares have ideas in them for nutritionists who have essential wares to sell—nutrition facts and good food practices. Therefore it is not surprising that the Utah Nutrition Council and the Food and Nutrition Section, Health Division, Welfare and Health Council of New York City called in men experienced in selling to get their thinking on methods for presenting nutrition information. Committee discussions brought out these suggestions:

Approach. Start with the interests of your audience. Personalize wherever possible. For example, parents are interested in family welfare; young adults in careers; adolescents and post-adolescents in social success; and children want to be like heroes. Show how good food habits help individuals achieve goals for family and self.

Present Facts Clearly, Accurately, and Convincingly. Use visual materials. Speak simply in the manner and customs of the locality. Explain scientific facts in terms people know. Back up your statements with evidence and do not claim too much. Encourage the group or individual to decide on the logical action to take after hearing the facts.

Build on Present Food Habits. Base recommendations on existing food habits. Limit suggestions for change to those unquestionably needed to suit the diet better to the nutritional requirements and economic means of the group or persons. Show the relationship of a new idea to the person's present practices, knowledge, and beliefs. People are more likely to accept a modification than a radical change in diet.

Use Many Outlets. Develop new and varied approaches to stimulate interest and reach people. Use publications that circulate in your neighborhood and are read by the audience you want to reach. Media for disseminating nutrition information that could be used more are youth's and men's magazines, shoppers' news, advertisements of local shops on the screens of neighborhood movie houses, and calendars and engagement books.

CONSUMER EDUCATION

Food manufacturers and food chain retailers have found that labels and advertisements that give the consumer recipes, menu suggestions, and information on nutritive value have resulted in increased sales. Aware of this, local retail grocers sometimes have welcomed the help of community nutritionists who have offered to work with them on advertisements and displays. Such cooperation has been reported especially during events such as Nutrition Week or Good Breakfast Month.

Background information on foods which can be used for advertisements, displays, stories, demonstrations, radio and TV broadcasts, and agency programs reaching the public may be obtained through your State or the Federal Extension Service Program. This program on consumer education in food marketing deals with current local availability and prices of foods; their selection, use, and care; and research findings and marketing developments in the food field.

The information is prepared for professional workers, including those of the press, radio, and TV so they can help shoppers get better nutritive returns for their food money.

This Consumer Education in Marketing Program is now being carried on in 15 States and Puerto Rico by 23 consumer-marketing specialists. Urban projects are being conducted in Baltimore, Md.; Louisville, Ky.; and Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn.; Seattle, Wash.; Salt Lake City and Ogden, Utah; and St. Louis, Mo. Some States operate on a State-wide basis and in some cases where market centers serve several States, they cooperate on regional projects.

SURVEY OF FOOD PRACTICES

A 'knocking on doors' survey can stimulate interest and participation in a nutrition education program. This was demonstrated in the Appomattox County, Va., study of nutrition information and food production and conservation practices of rural homemakers. The interest shown by people in the county was high because local leaders helped plan and carry out the survey. A county com-

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Food chain retailers have found

mittee of representatives of 17 different cooperating agencies met many times to decide what questions should be included and how the survey should be made. District, State, and Federal Extension workers cooperated with the county committee in planning and carrying out the study.

The data collected proved effective in mobilizing the county to meet the needs revealed. The 150 representatives attending the fall meeting of the Virginia Council on Health and Medical Care heard the findings presented by a panel made up of a homemaker who took part in the study, a farm agent, home economics supervisor, district home demonstration agent, Experiment Station home economist, and State food specialist. This group expressed interest in helping to make many local studies on a smaller scale in other sections of the State.

The findings, believed to be typical of much of the State, were brought to the attention of people all over Virginia by news items, radio talks, and reports on meetings, Extension Food and Nutrition Specialist Janet L. Cameron reports. The 1953 programs of all county home demonstration clubs reflect the needs indicated by the study. Homemakers have become more interested in nutrition since the findings of the study were made public.

Because the survey showed that only 44 percent of the homemakers said they usually served tomatoes, oranges, or grapefruit in some form each day, a campaign to increase home production and preservation of tomatoes was launched in early spring. As a result there was not only greater production and use of fresh tomatoes but members of home demonstration clubs canned an average of 30 to 40 quarts of tomatoes for use when fresh tomatoes are scarce.

CORRECTING MISINFORMATION

In beginning its work the Subcommittee on Misinformation on Foods and Nutrition of the West Virginia Nutrition Council is gathering examples of faulty food and nutrition statements both spoken and written.

The Council is correcting the misinformation it finds by (1) recommending and using publications which have been indorsed or prepared by professional organizations and State and Federal agencies; (2) spreading authentic information through all media available; and (3) using the Council's questionnaires "How Am I Doing?" and "Which Is It?" (Nov.-Dec. 1952 NCN) as a basis for talks and other public contacts.

The nutritionist of the Interwoven Stocking Company in Martinsburg, W. Va., used the questionnaires as a follow-up of a nutrition demonstration for the company's employees. Employees showed greatest knowledge about coffee's contribution to the diet and the effect of overweight. Their lowest scores were on a question concerned with selection of the best food sources of vitamin C and another

on the food needed to offset slow visual adaptation from daylight to a darkened room.

The Nutrition Division of the Pennsylvania Department of Health has had success in using a short questionnaire "Who Knows Which Are Facts—Fallacies" to arouse interest of adult groups. The ten questions are answered by Yes or No and individuals can score their answers from information given on the reverse side of the sheet. The questions reflect such current topics as "Is meal-skipping a good practice in weight reduction?", "Does yogurt have more food value than milk?" and "Can vitamin pills replace natural foods?"

NUTRITION WEEK

The Illinois Nutrition Committee and Chicago Nutrition Association cooperated in sponsoring Illinois Nutrition Week November 15–21. They believe that attention on food and nutrition during a set period is a good way to provide impetus to a long-time nutrition education program. Proclamations by the Illinois Governor and the Mayor of Chicago and the program of events gave newspapers material for publicity.

To encourage as much participation as possible a leaflet was distributed in advance throughout the State and city giving suggestions for celebrating the Week, names of committee chairmen who would help local groups with speakers and program planning, and a list of the Basic 7 food groups.

Libraries were sent material about Nutrition Week, booklets and pamphlets on nutrition, list of books on food and nutrition for lay person, and list of magazine articles and booklets that can be purchased at low cost. Books on nutrition were displayed on special library shelves.

Letters were sent to schools suggesting that they hold poster contests; display posters in the cafeterias; have home economics students give talks on nutrition before other classes; and arrange nutrition talks at parent-teacher associations, women's clubs, and other group meetings.

News items were supplied to house organs of member agencies and the press and radio. Tape recordings were made available. Local groups were asked to arrange with grocers and school lunch managers to display posters of the Basic 7 food groups, a good lunch, and menu patterns.

The kick-off luncheon in Chicago featured Dr. C. A. Elvehjem as speaker, with the Mayor, Chicago and Cook County superintendents of schools, official representatives of various professional groups in Chicago, and the press invited.

Exhibits were displayed in branch libraries, business establishments, City Hall, Northwestern Settlement House, Chicago Health Department, and the Museum of Science and Industry. The Museum also showed nutrition movies.

Several large companies used the slogan for the Week "Food First for Fitness; Chicago Nutrition Week Nov. 15-21" in their postage meter machines. Some companies featured nutrition week in their advertising. The Restaurant Association promoted the use of table tents in restaurants to stimulate interest in good eating.

NEWSPAPER COLUMNS

Popular titles and brief newspaper articles bring to Vermont people accurate information on food and nutrition subjects of interest to them, according to Marion H. Brown, Chairman of the Vermont Nutrition Committee. The articles have appeared weekly for 12 years, at first under the column heading "Your Food and You" and now under "Your Food Today."

Articles are planned by a subcommittee of the Vermont Nutrition Committee which meets twice a year to schedule and assign topics to appropriate subject matter specialists. On the subcommittee are an Extension nutritionist who is well acquainted with food habits and food needs throughout the State; a research nutritionist who calls attention to new findings; a teacher trainer who sees nutrition in relation to high school boys and girls; a State Department of Health nutritionist in contact with public health nurses and familiar with family food problems; a consulting dietitian with experience in hospitals and other public-feeding institutions; an editor who knows how to make a column more readable; and a State home demonstration agent leader who has worked with Vermont homemakers for many years.

Topics are suited to the month, season, and nutritional needs of Vermont people. The schedule is flexible enough to adjust to special events or new developments.

A form is used in inviting writers to contribute, giving the suggested title, content, date due, and date of release. Space is provided for the person to confirm his willingness to write the article. Writers generally accept assignments because requests are made well in advance, the articles are short enough not to be a burden, and the writers understand the purpose of the column through their contacts with the State Nutrition Committee.

The article is sent to the associate editor of the Vermont Agricultural Extension Service. Mimeographed copies are sent to all daily and weekly newspapers in the State, radio stations, and a number of national and regional farm magazines.

A recent survey showed that 7 daily and 9 weekly newspapers with a total circulation of over 75,000 use the column and want it continued. When readers were asked if they wanted the column to go on many commendatory replies were received showing that the column was useful to housewives and mothers.

RADIO RECORDINGS

The Ohio Nutrition Committee in cooperation with the Ohio Department of Health prepared a series of six 12-minute radio plays for broadcast by most of the 80 local stations in the State. The series, entitled "Nutrition and You" shows how a hypothetical family called the Martins met their nutrition problems. Included are such topics as weight control, food preparation, food purchasing, feeding the family, school lunch, and food for older folks. Opening and closing announcements of each broadcast referred the listener to the local health department for reliable basic nutrition information.

Six sets of the broadcast recordings were made and one was assigned to each of the district offices of the Ohio Department of Health. These offices loaned the recordings to member agencies of the nutrition committee for use with small groups.

PHOTOGRAPH CONTEST

To promote interest in good nutrition among Canadians as well as to find out what nutrition projects were going on throughout Canada the Canadian Department of National Health and Welfare held a national photograph contest in 1952 and is holding a similar contest this year. Subjects may illustrate nutrition research, education, or a direct nutrition service. The contest is open to all Canadian citizens except professional photographers and employees of the Nutrition Division of the Department.

Seventy-four photographs were entered in the 1952 contest and depicted—

- School lunch scenes
- Work done by school children, such as exhibits, posters, nutrition experiments with rats, and vegetable gardens.
- Public health nurses teaching classes of expectant mothers, giving advice to the aging, and conducting clinic examinations.

Cash awards were given for first and second prizes and to the best entry from each province. The judging was based on public health value of the idea, scientific accuracy of detail, and artistic arrangement and perfection of photograph.

Judges were the chief of the Nutrition Division and the director of the Information Services of the Department of National Health and Welfare and a well-known Ottawa photographer.

A photograph of children being served lunch at school won first prize; a photograph of a man with vegetables grown in a community garden came out second.

PUPPETS

A puppet show with lovable and interesting characters, using children's language, is an old favorite for entertaining and teaching children. Whether used in schools or on TV, puppets arouse and hold attention as they go through exciting and amusing adventures within the child's experience.

Puppets with heads representing vegetables and fruits were made by Miss Dorothy Bovee of the District of Columbia Chapter, American Red Cross, for use in teaching the first three of the Basic 7 food groups. Orville Orange is the hero who, with Tommy Tomato and Little Miss Cabbage, represent the vitamin C group; Connie Kale and Carrie Carrot, the green and yellow vegetables; and Polly Potato, Peter Peach, and Calvin Cauliflower, the other vegetables and fruits. These characters discuss their contributions to the children's health in lively dialogue.

The puppets are 12 inches high. Their gaily dressed bodies are made of stuffed cloth and their heads of colored felt shaped into fruits, leaves, or roots.

A light-weight plywood stage, consisting of a proscenium, floor, and two sides, with open top, front, and back, folds for convenient carrying. The stage itself measures 28" long, 19" high, and 16" deep. Dark draperies form a backdrop and conceal the manipulator who speaks for the puppets. Draw curtains across the front carry out the theater idea.

MATERIALS

Listing of these materials is for information of readers and does not necessarily mean recommendation. They may be obtained from the addresses given after the name of the publication. The symbol INF refers to Office of Information, USDA, Washington 25, D. C.

MILK FOR ALL. J. P. Brunson. [14 pp.], illus. 1952. From State Bd. of Health of South Carolina, Columbia 1, S.C. Single copies free; additional copies 25c each.

AMERICA AND YOU. J. P. Brunson. 60 pp., illus. Rev. 1952. From State Bd. of Health of South Carolina, Columbia 1, S.C. Single copies free; additional copies 25c.

NUTRITION EDUCATION IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS. H. S. Lockhart and F. E. Whitehead. Harvard University School of Public Health. 43 pp., illus. 1952. From The Nutrition Foundation, Inc., Chrysler Bldg., New York 17, N. Y. \$1.00.

PRESENT KNOWLEDGE IN NUTRITION. Prepared from articles published in Nutrition Reviews. 122 pp. 1953. From The Nutrition Foundation, Inc., Chrysler Bldg., New York 17, N. Y. \$2.00

A UTILIZATION LISTING AND WHERE-TO-USE GUIDE OF MORE THAN 600 ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA FILMS. 16 pp. From Encyclopedia Britannica Films, 1150 Wilmette Ave., Wilmette, Ill. Free.

TELEVISION FOR YOU. A HANDBOOK FOR EXTENSION AGENTS. J. D. Tonkin and A. F. Skelsey. Agr. Handb. 55. 24 pp., illus. 1953. From Extension Service, USDA, Washington 25, D. C. Free.

A GUIDE TO THE FAMILY FOOD BUDGET. ARC 1550. 3 pp. Oct. 1953. Processed. From local chapters, American Red Cross. Free.

FOOD AND NUTRITION. A GUIDE FOR INSTRUCTORS IN HOME CARE OF THE SICK (INCLUDING THE CARE OF THE AGING AND CHRONICALLY ILL), MOTHER AND BABY CARE, AND NURSE'S AIDE TRAINING. ARC 1648. 11 pp. 1953. Processed. From local chapters, American Red Cross. Free.

HONEY—SOME WAYS TO USE IT. Bur. Human Nutrition and Home Economics, USDA. H & G 37. 16 pp. 1953. INF.

WAYS TO COOK RABBIT. M. T. Swickard and A. M. Harkin. Bur. Human Nutrition and Home Economics, USDA. H & G 35. 16 pp. 1953. INF.

ROOT VEGETABLES IN EVERYDAY MEALS. Bur. Human Nutrition and Home Economics, USDA. H & G 33. 1953. 12 pp. 1953. (Revision of L 294) INF.

PRESSURE CANNERS—USE AND CARE. E. Beveridge, Bur. Human Nutrition and Home Economics, USDA. H & G 30. 6 pp., illus. 1953. INF.

POULTRY BUYING GUIDES FOR CONSUMERS. R. S. Carpenter and A. W. Otte. Production and Marketing Administration, USDA. H & G 34. 1953. 8 pp., illus. INF.